3. CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Interacting with the physical constituent of landscape are material culture and the cognitive attitudes and habits it implies. This chapter summarizes the prehistory and history of the Wake County area of the Piedmont as well as the archaeological investigations previously conducted in the project vicinity. Most of the cultural sequence for the project vicinity is based on Coe's (1964) investigations of the Hardaway and Doerschuk sites, located on the Yadkin River in Stanly and Montgomery counties to the southwest, and the Gaston site, on the Roanoke River to the north. More recent research has elaborated Coe's original observations, but the general sequence that he described remains valid for the region. Information on the later prehistory of the area is drawn from research by Davis and Ward (1991), Dickens et al. (1987), and Ward and Davis (1993), among others. Data on the Euro-American settlement of the area were obtained from a number of regional and local histories, including Powell (1989).

PREHISTORIC CONTEXT

The Piedmont and Coastal Plain of North Carolina have been inhabited for at least 15,000 years, and have witnessed several major changes in the cultural traditions of its residents. The prehistory of the project area can be divided into three basic time/cultural periods—Paleoindian, Archaic, and Woodland.

Pre-Paleoindian Period (before ca. 10,000 B.C.)

Evidence is accumulating against the once strongly held view that Clovis hunters were the first human occupants of the Western Hemisphere. The topic is of such intense interest that it merited a cover story in *U.S. News and World Report* (Petit 1998). North Carolina rests between two of the reported Pre-Paleoindian finds, the Cactus Hill site (McAvoy and McAvoy 1997) in Virginia and the Topper site in South Carolina (Goodyear, personal communication, 1998). The senior author worked at Meadowcroft Rockshelter in the 1970s and has examined both the Cactus Hill and Topper site collections. The Cactus Hill lithics clearly resemble those in comparable levels at Meadowcroft, especially in the use of local cobbles to make flake-blades. The Topper site collection is different, containing a prismatic blade fragment in its lowest level. The Cactus Hill site is by now a well-established find with dates around 13,000 B.C. Dates are not yet available on Topper site and only a couple of test pits have been excavated. The site appears to contain a rock feature well below the Clovis level.

Paleoindian Period (ca. 10,000–8000 B.C.)

The first clear evidence for human occupation in the southeastern United States is during the Paleoindian period, approximately 10,000 to 8000 B.C. The Paleoindian occupation of the Southeast is known predominantly from surface sites. Paleoindian groups are presumed to have been highly mobile, with a subsistence strategy based on migratory (and now-extinct) large animals such as elephants, but would have relied on other plant and animal food resources as well (Meltzer and Smith 1986). Anderson (1995) believes that the general extinction of the megafauna about 8800 B.C. marks the end of the early Paleoindian period. Settlements are thought to include small temporary camps and less common base camps, which were occupied by loosely organized bands. The base camps are generally located near high-quality lithic resource areas such as the Thunderbird site in northern Virginia (Gardner 1979, 1986). Paleoindians selected high-quality lithic materials for tools. However, McAvoy (1992) investigated Paleoindian settlement patterns in the Nottoway drainage 90 miles to the north of the project area and discovered that Paleoindian hunters also camped in Coastal Plain areas distant from the rich lithic resources of the Piedmont. The Williamson site in southeastern Virginia seems to have been the focus of

a Paleoindian settlement pattern in the region. Hundreds of Clovis points have been recovered (McCary 1954). The Great Dismal Swamp held a particular attraction for Paleoindians (McAvoy 1964; Rappleye and Gardner 1979). It could have been a mastodon hunting area, but no evidence of tools with mastodon remains has come to light yet, as it has in other areas in the Southeast. In Georgia, O'Steen (1992) found that Paleoindian settlement patterns spread during the three generally recognized Paleoindian phases from lowlands early in the period to both highlands and lowlands late in the period. Great numbers of Dalton sites and the occurrence of a Dalton cemetery in Arkansas suggest relatively dense populations in the late Paleoindian period (Morse and Morse 1983), at least in some regions.

Key diagnostics of this period are fluted and unfluted lanceolate projectile points; formal flake tools, such as endscrapers, gravers, retouched blades, and burins, are also associated with the Paleoindian period (Gardner 1979). Over the course of the Paleoindian period, fluted point forms became smaller, and true fluting gave way to basal thinning. Locally, terminal Paleoindian assemblages are identified by Hardaway/Dalton projectile point forms, broad, thin, triangular bifaces with deeply concave bases and shallow side notches (Coe 1964:64), which are thought to date ca. 8500–7800 B.C. (Goodyear 1982). The Hardaway complex, consisting of Dalton-like points and preforms, was first identified at the Hardaway site on the Yadkin River, and also has been found in buried deposits at sites on the lower Haw River in Chatham County (Cable 1992; Claggett and Cable 1982).

The focus of early Paleoindian activity in North Carolina and Virginia appears to have been in southeastern Virginia in the area around the Williamson site (McCary 1954), perhaps with the Great Dismal Swamp as a major concern (McAvoy 1992; McAvoy and McAvoy 1997). During later Paleoindian times, perhaps after the extinction of the megafauna, attention turned more toward the Piedmont, with major concentrations of interest around the Hardaway site (Coe 1964).

Archaic Period (ca. 8000–1000 B.C.)

The Archaic period is characterized by a reliance on large animals and wild plant resources that became increasingly stabilized and broad-based during the Holocene. On the Atlantic Slope, groups are presumed to be fairly mobile, making use of seasonally available resources focused primarily in the uplands (Mouer 1991). Exploitation of broad upland landscapes, especially for mast crops, generated an equally broad net of sites encompassing most of the terrain. Site size increased during the Late Archaic as the focus shifted to the lowlands, probably toward fishing, culminating in a relatively complex and populous society. Settlement patterns shifted to linear arrangements of sites along drainages, perhaps generating enriched communications networks and consequently complex social organization.

The Early Archaic period (ca. 8000–6000 B.C.) seems to reflect a continuation of the Paleoindian period hunting and foraging lifestyle, but with modern game species. Early Archaic point types common in Piedmont North Carolina include the Kirk and Palmer forms found in abundance at the Hardaway site (Coe 1964). These diagnostic artifacts are accompanied by a variety of other bifacial and unifacial chipped stone tools, including scrapers, drills, and adzes. Regional population densities on the Atlantic Slope concentrated along major river systems, especially the Pee Dee, but also the Savannah, Neuse, and Roanoke rivers (Sassaman and Anderson 1994:171–175); the greatest concentrations are generally at or near the Fall Line.

The Middle Archaic (ca. 6000–3500 B.C.) is distinguished from the Early Archaic by the more frequent recovery of groundstone artifacts and a less diverse chipped stone tool kit. Diagnostic bifaces that occur during this period include Stanly, Morrow Mountain, and Guilford types (Blanton and Sassaman 1989; Coe 1964). Along the Atlantic Slope, hunting and gathering bands probably formed the primary social and economic units in most regions. Larger sites occur near major drainages (Coe 1964), but occupations also appear near upland watercourses (Gunn and Foss 1992; Gunn and Wilson 1993). Numerous small dispersed upland scatters are also characteristic of the Middle Archaic.

Recent reinvestigation and reevaluation of numerous sites along the Gulf and southern Atlantic coasts suggest that large burial mounds were present during the Middle and Late Archaic in those regions (Russo 1994). Most of these early mounds date between 3000 and 2000 B.C., or during the Late Archaic, but some mounds date to as early as 5000 B.C., in the Middle Archaic. There appears to be something of a hiatus in mound building between 1000 B.C. and the generally recognized Early Woodland mounds. Whether mounds imply complex social organization during the Middle and Late Archaic in the southern regions of the Southeast is being evaluated. Generally, the development of stable burial places is taken to imply at least semisedentary expanded populations.

In the Piedmont, additional evidence is emerging that suggests a less arboreal and more grassland environment that supported warm-climate panicoid grasses (Webb 1995:140), presumably herds of large game, and a landscape with sand blowouts on exposed hilltops along the Fall Line sandhills (Gunn and Foss 1992). Mounds, in combination with intimations of open Middle Holocene environments noted above, suggest a revised perspective on the Archaic, and imply a rather populous, if mobile, culture according to the principles of optimal foraging (see Butzer 1982). Using Morrow Mountain point frequencies as a population indicator suggests that the greatest Middle Archaic concentration of population was in the North and South Carolina Piedmont (Sassaman and Anderson 1994:176) while the Coastal Plain was virtually abandoned.

The Late Archaic (ca. 3500–1000 B.C.) represents the latest preceramic period, or the earliest ceramic period in some locations after 2500 B.C., with the introduction of fiber-tempered wares. Savannah River (Coe 1964) projectile points and knives are the most common diagnostic biface types, but steatite bowls and a number of other artifact types are also common in this period.

During the Late Archaic some groups lived for long periods of time in single, strategically placed large villages. Existing information suggests that the population during this period was relatively dense, and that the largest settlements occurred along the major river systems and along the coasts (Sassaman and Anderson 1994:176–177). There was a major infilling of numerous habitats, suggesting larger populations exploiting a wide range of resources. As noted above, some of these groups built burial mounds.

Villages, reflected by increasing site size, became more common in the Late Archaic. Structures have not been identified archaeologically in North Carolina or Virginia (McLearen 1991:113) and thus are inferred from Tennessee data to be cabana-like shelters about 20 feet in diameter. Large burned rock platforms 30 feet across with adjoining fire hearths have been described in the James River valley and other areas, probably used for processing anadromous fish (Mouer 1991). In Georgia, 4-x-5-m pit houses have been reported from 1900 B.C. (Ledbetter 1991). Although the beginnings of horticulture appeared during the Late Archaic, the importance of agriculture for subsistence purposes was probably minimal.

Woodland Period (ca. 1000 B.C.–A.D. 900)

The Woodland period sequence in the Carolina Piedmont was first defined by Coe (1964), based on his work at the Doerschuk site. Coe recognized two successive Woodland period occupations at this site, which he termed Badin and Yadkin. Subsequent investigations have provided new data concerning the Woodland period subsistence and settlement patterns (Ward 1983). The Woodland is marked by episodes of sedentariness and improvements in food storage and preparation technologies. Subsistence strategies were a continuation of earlier hunter-forager ways, with an increased reliance on the cultivation of native plants.

Religious life, as suggested by evidence of ceremonialism and the construction of burial mounds, revived and gained emphasis. Earthen and rock mounds were constructed as near to North Carolina as Georgia and Virginia during the Woodland period. Rock mounds appeared in the Potomac watershed in northern Virginia during the Early Woodland (Gardner 1993; Gunn 1994b). In northeast Georgia the Middle

Woodland Swift Creek culture built earthen mounds (Fish and Jefferies 1983) associated with rectangular structures. Rock mounds have also been reported in northern and central Georgia (Garrow 1988; Jefferies and Fish 1978). Both regions were influenced by Hopewell mound builders in the Midwest. For reasons yet to be fathomed, mound building apparently did not occur in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain of North Carolina and southeastern Virginia during all cultural periods. However, some evidence was found of the use of sand mounds, perhaps constructed, by Holmes in eastern Wake County in the nineteenth century (Robinson 1998).

Large triangular projectile points are diagnostic of the Woodland period; this change in point style from the large notched and stemmed dart points of the Archaic may be linked with the introduction of bow and arrow technology into eastern North America. In the Neuse Fall Line region, which contains a concentration of Early Woodland sites just below the Falls of the Neuse, Eared Yadkins with a focus in the southern Piedmont and Wakefields (resembling Piscataways from Virginia) were found in association, or possible in stratigraphic order, with the Eared Yadkins (Gunn et al. 1998). Ceramics became more refined and regional differentiation of wares-particularly with respect to temper, paste, and surface decoration-appeared. Shell tempered, coiled ceramics appeared around Chesapeake Bay and spread down the coast as far as Pender County where the continental shelf becomes steep enough to diminish the shellfish presence (Mathis 1998). However, sand- and crushed-quartz-tempered ceramics persisted in the Piedmont until contact (Woodall 1996).

Late Prehistoric Period (ca. A.D. 1000–1500)

The Mississippian period in most of the Southeast is marked by a rise of ceremonialism expressed in large public constructions, the development of maize agriculture, and a more rigid social organization. Flat-topped temple mounds and a more highly organized village structure developed during this period. Artifacts diagnostic of the Mississippian period include small triangular projectile points and ceramic wares distinct from the Woodland ceramic types. There is increasing evidence that territorial boundaries between chiefdoms were closely maintained during the Mississippian period. Valleys between chiefdoms appear to have been abandoned.

Town Creek is a Mississippian mound site located about 100 miles to the southwest of the project area, and another mound was reported in Caldwell County on the upper Yadkin River 120 miles to the west (Gunn, Roberts et al. 1991; Oliver 1985, 1992). The latter is associated with the extensive mound building of Appalachian Mountain cultures during the Mississippian period.

The temporal equivalent of Mississippian in the Piedmont is the Late Prehistoric Siouan culture, represented by the Haw River (A.D. 1000–1400) and Hillsboro (A.D. 1400–1600) phases. The Haw River phase is marked by net-impressed pottery similar to the Dan River series. During the subsequent Hillsboro phase, ceramics changed substantially and villages were nucleated within stockades (Davis and Ward 1991). European conquest brought an end to the Late Prehistoric/Mississippian lifestyle, although many relics of the material trappings, belief systems, and social structure of classic Mississippian society lingered into the eighteenth century.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Although no historic remains were recovered during the excavations at Neuse Levee, it is useful to know the historical context of a site to aid interpretation of the prehistoric artifacts and transportation, quarrying, and horticultural activity patterns. For example, historically the crossing at Neuse Levee was an important road between Fayetteville on the Cape Fear River and Louisburg on the Tar River. Such roads normally followed ancient Native American paths. What was the meaning and utility of this path prehistorically and what effect did it have on the Neuse Levee occupations? Was it a loading point for river traffic? Another interesting observation is that the so-called Louisburg Road follows a line of

traverse quite different from that of the modern highway, veering off to the east to pass through the colonial community of Roger's Crossroads, which was apparently the homestead of the owner of Roger's Ferry that crossed the Neuse River at Neuse Levee until the early nineteenth century. The Late Woodland components at Neuse Levee suggest a prehistoric village farming community to which Neuse Levee served a supporting role. Was Roger's Crossroads founded in an old field, a remnant Native American farmland that contains the base camp for Neuse Levee? Understanding modern quarrying practices can also help to identify valuable lithic rock resources in the human landscape.

Early Historic Period Native American Occupation

The historic Native American occupation of the North Carolina Piedmont has been documented both ethnohistorically and through excavations at several sites, including Keyauwee Town in Randolph County (Coe 1937) and the Fredericks site (Occaneechi Town) in Orange County (Davis and Ward 1991). At the time of the earliest contact with Euro-Americans, the Piedmont was occupied by more than 40 separate Siouan-speaking tribes (Davis and Ward 1991:40), while the Iroquoian-speaking Tuscarora occupied the Coastal Plain (Lefler 1967). In 1701, Lawson (Lefler 1967) found the Occaneechi upstream from the project area near Hillsborough, and the Tuscarora downstream at and below the Falls of the Neuse.

As Merrell (1987:20–21) and other researchers (e.g., Hargrove 1986:13) have noted, the early historic period was marked by extensive epidemics among the Native American populations of the area, which, along with the increasing Euro-American intrusions, forced the surviving groups to relocate and regroup in an attempt to survive. Examples of later movements include the Tutelo and Saponi, who were living near Fort Christianna on the Meherrin River in Virginia early in the 1720s (Byrd 1967:310), but in 1728 moved back into the Carolina Piedmont (Byrd 1967:312; Merrell 1987:26). The Tutelo moved into the upper Yadkin watershed, while the Saponi temporarily resided in the area in the process of moving south to near the present location of Salisbury. Their stay in the Piedmont was short-lived, however, and by 1732 they returned to Virginia. From there, most of the surviving groups eventually drifted north to join the Iroquois (Merrell 1987:26).

The movement of recognized groups should not be taken to mean that all Native Americans left North Carolina. Ongoing relations between Native Americans and Euro-Americans are documented through the Colonial and Post-Colonial periods (e.g., Garrow 1975). It is, however, less clear how Native American populations in the Wake County area fared through the historic period. However, there are occasional indications in the historical record of continuance. Lawson reported in 1709 that several groups had "come amongst us" (Claggett et al. 1978:12). A group of "Saponis," by then probably composed of Saponis, Occaneechis, and other groups, were reported to be living on the plantation of William Eaton in present-day Vance County (Hargrove 1986:17). Others on the Roanoke River took English names and lived primarily by hunting (Hargrove 1986:17). All of these avenues of entry to colonial society suggest that at least some of the Native Americans continued as part of the North Carolina population at large. As is being discovered in many states along the Atlantic seaboard, native groups appear to have officially disappeared in the eighteenth century, and in some cases have reappeared in recent decades (Cunningham 1998).

Myer's (1971) map of trading paths records protohistoric routes flowing along the edge of the Piedmont, generally at about the elevation of Hillsborough, and dipping down to the coast in the Wilmington, North Carolina–Charleston, South Carolina, and Chesapeake Bay areas. However, they do not approach the North Carolina coast in the intervening areas, giving the impression of a gap, or at least a weak link, in communications across North Carolina during the protohistoric period. There is discussion as to whether the Trading Path to the Indians (Myer's Path 80, now I-85) predated trade between the Virginia colony and Piedmont Native Americans. This, too, widens the recognized communications links.

Euro-American Settlement

The Historic era in the Atlantic Slope area can be broadly divided into four periods: the Ethnohistoric period (1492–1607), which is known primarily from observations of Native Americans by explorers, the Colonial period (1607–1775), the Antebellum period (1775–1865), and the postbellum period (after 1865). Early European colonial settlement took place along the coastal region of the state after 1650 (Powell 1989); however, after the Tuscarora War, which ended in 1713 (Byrd 1998; Powell 1989), occupation began in the interior. Populations of various origins—Scots-Irish, German, Pennsylvanian, and Chesapeake Tidewater—converged on the Piedmont below the Blue Ridge Mountains after 1750, creating a distinctive regional cultural pattern (Powell 1989).

Historians believe that the first recorded observation of northern Wake County was by John Lawson (Murray 1983:8). In 1701, he embarked on an exploratory tour of interior North and South Carolina for the Lords Proprietors, English noblemen who controlled the region at the time. Lawson departed from Charleston, South Carolina, and after traveling though the Piedmont turned southeastward, visiting Native American towns near Hillsborough and Durham. In February, he came to a place reported to him by his Native American guides to be *Wee quo Whom*, now Falls of the Neuse. Lawson saw huge boulders and reported a strong sound like many mills, generated by the chest-deep river as it flowed around the boulders. The area at that time was apparently part of the Tuscarora hunting grounds; Lawson met two Tuscarora hunters at the Falls of the Neuse 7.2 km up stream from the US 401 bridge. Lawson proceeded down the Neuse River to the coast, where he helped establish what would become New Bern.

New Bern was the first county seat of Craven County, which at that time extended inland to include Wake County. Following the Tuscarora War (1711–1713), settlers began to move up the Neuse River as new arrivals from Europe found only already-settled lands around New Bern (Murray 1983:18), and land upstream was newly available. Both the Neuse and the Tar rivers were navigable in small craft to above US 401 (Robinson 1998:22). The first continuous trading center in Wake County developed around Higdon's trading post below the Falls of the Neuse (Murray 1983:99). In the same area, Charles Sims owned an ordinary that was licensed in the 1750s (Murray 1983:35), and the earliest church was located on New Light Creek in 1755 upstream from the Falls.

Downstream 8 km from the Falls was the Neuse Levee site, and nearby was Wake Crossroads, known as Roger's Crossroads until this century (Figure 3.1). In the late eighteenth century a land route passed the site. It was referred to as the old Stage Road or Louisburg Road from Fayetteville, then Cross Creek on the Cape Fear, to Louisburg on the Tar. The Neuse Levee site is on or adjacent to a convenient crossing of the river, formed by the gentle slope for several miles from the southwest still followed by US 401. In the late 1700s Roger's Ferry served the passing traffic. A bridge was built in 1820 (Robinson 1998:22). The small community of Roger's Crossroads, north of the Neuse River, had a church and tavern. According to the Mouzon map (see Figure 3.1), as late as 1775 the area south of the river was uninhabited except for a court house.

As population spread upriver, new counties were organized. In 1746, Johnston County was formed, which included Wake County. Finally, in 1771, Wake County was incorporated (Corbitt 1950). Because of various geographic influences, Wake County, the administrative center of present-day North Carolina, was the last area in the region to be settled by Europeans. As early as the 1740s, large numbers of settlers moved into the eastern edge of the Piedmont (present-day Orange County) from the west, after following the Great Wagon Road from Pennsylvania (Powell 1989). Since they were often as concerned with water power as land, the valleys were claimed first and the intervening uplands later (Gunn 1994b). Settlers also moved up the Cape Fear River to Fayetteville by 1720, and from there trekked over the Cape Fear-Neuse interfluve into southern Wake County (Murray 1983:18). In the 1730s, others from Virginia began to follow ridgelines down the Piedmont from Virginia searching for appropriate tobacco

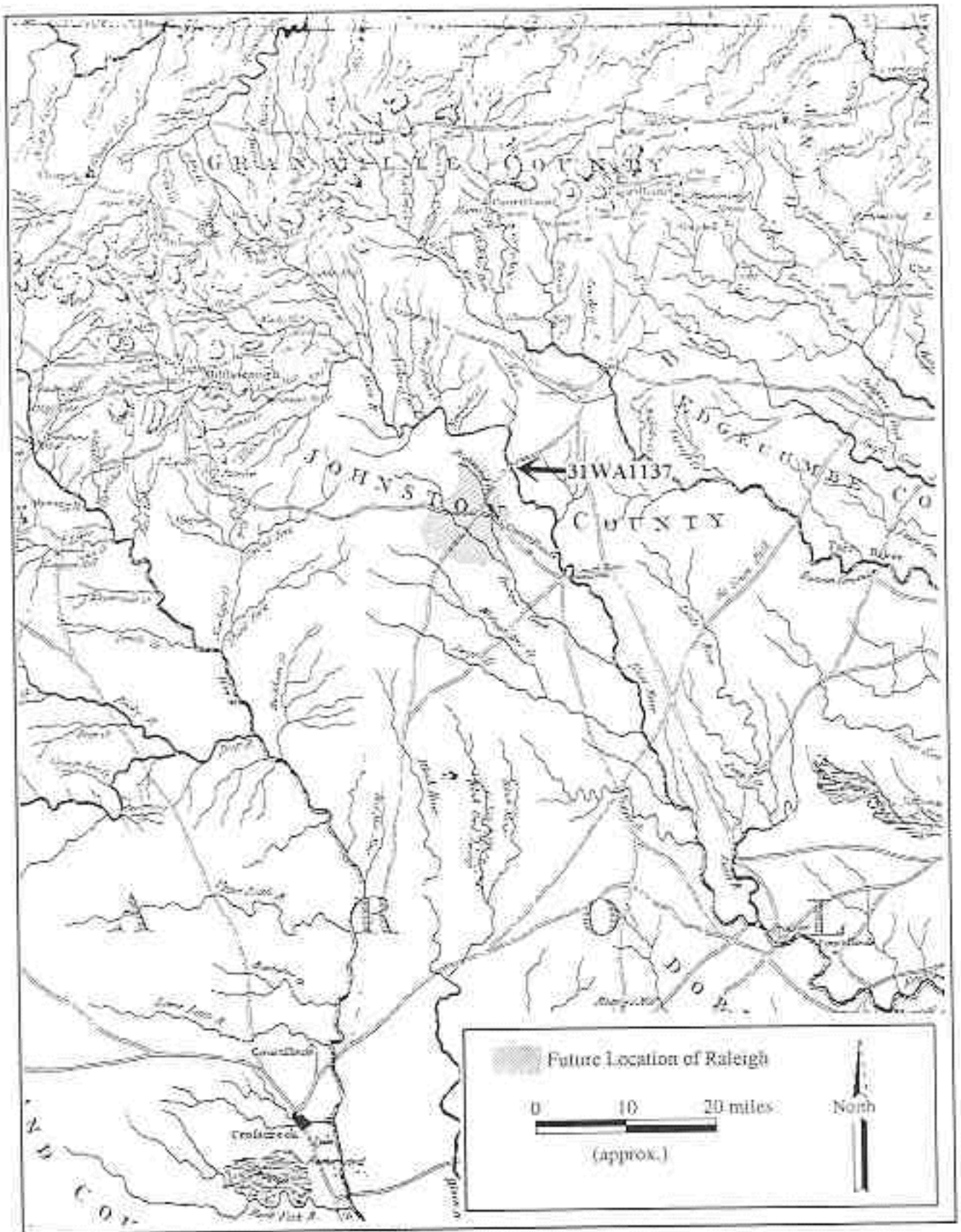


Figure 3.1. Section of the Mouzon 1775 Map.

lands (Trimble 1974). They arrived in Vance County 40 miles to the north in the Nutbush community, and were soon important suppliers of tobacco to trade centers in Petersburg in Virginia (Gunn et al. 1991). The late settlement of Wake County was in spite of the fact that the Neuse River is one of the major rivers of the state (Murray 1983:18).

Before the American Revolution, the area that would become Wake County found itself under a series of administrative bureaucracies because of a complex series of proprietary changes that followed developments in Europe. From 1663 to 1729 North and South Carolina were part of the lands granted to the Lords Proprietors. Colonial governors administered the region between 1729 and 1746. Wake County fell just north of 35° 34' north latitude, which marked the southern boundary of Lord Granville's district below the Virginia line. Because Lord Granville was the only one of the Lords Proprietors not to relinquish his hold on colonial lands to the King in 1746, the Granville district administration continued from 1746 until the American Revolution.

The Granville bureaucracy did not keep careful records of land grants, so it is likely that the names and holdings of the earliest landholders in the county have been lost (Murray 1983:14). It is known that large pieces of land that encompassed present-day Wake County were granted by Colonial Governor Burrington to four absentee landowners in 1729. It is possible that when the new owners involved themselves in a failed coup against Burrington, they hid themselves in the then largely deserted Wake County area (Murray 1983:15). In 1740, under a new Governor Johnston, the rebels were reissued grants along Crabtree and Walnut creeks. Obligations to settle these tracts probably drew the first large numbers of settlers into the Wake County area. These landowners are known to have rented out land, but the names of the renters are lost. At the end of the Colonial period, the tracts of land were seized by the state and acquired by residents such as Joel Lane and Joseph Montfort, prominent figures in early Wake County history.

Wake County remained largely deserted until 1792, when the North Carolina General Assembly resolved to establish a permanent capital in Wake County. Upon meeting the surveyors sent to select a location, Joel Lane sold land to the legislature upon which the capitol was built. The City of Raleigh was planned, laid out, and began to function as the state's capital (Powell 1989). Even so, development and growth of the area remained slow until well into the nineteenth century (Murray 1983).

The professions in early Wake County began with traders and millers. Daniel Higdon owned a trading post near the Falls of the Neuse, and probably a mill as well (Murray 1983:31). The land at the Falls was first legally owned in 1762 by Joseph Montfort, the first Grand Master of the Masons in the colonies. During the 1750s, a mill was built on Smiths Creek 2 km west of Neuse Levee by Joshua Haughton and Thomas Boykin (Murray 1983:29). Before the Revolutionary War, there were two attorneys, two doctors, and no clergymen resident in Wake County. After the capitol was established in Raleigh in 1792, the focus of settlement shifted to the Raleigh area of the county. However, Wake County still retained its basically wild character as suggested by a 1764 bounty paid on panthers, wolves, and wildcats. In 1779, bounties were still being paid on wolves (Murray 1983:27). The northern part of Wake County and southern Granville and Franklin counties retained a reputation for independence and inaccessibility into the nineteenth century, being referred to as the "Rogues Quarter" or "The Hurricane" (Murray 1983:97–98). No other towns were chartered in Wake County until 1837 (Rolesville, northeast of Neuse Levee on the US 401/Louisburg Road). Poor roads were a problem for travelers and the rivers remained important means of transportation until the coming of the railroad in the late 1830s.

The Hurricane phenomenon is of interest on a Neuse River levee because it was generated by a tropical storm, and such storms are known to result in violent flood events and much erosion of uplands and deposition in lowlands (Gunn et al. 1998). A particularly strong hurricane is reported to have struck the North Carolina coast in 1769 (Barnes 1995; Garrow and Joseph 1985), and could have caused a flood. Although it was not studied in detail because there were no included historic artifacts, the lower, or historic, levee appears to have been deposited in historic times and was almost certainly a part of the

general erosional-depositional aftermath that resulted from the convergence of tropical storms and tobacco farming upon the region.

As in other tidewater communities along the east coast, including the colonial capital of North Carolina at New Bern, efforts were made to escape the heat, pestilence, and mosquitoes of coastal areas during the summer (Fischer 1989:250–251). The Fall Line front was a popular place for summer homes, especially in present-day Orange County (Gunn 1994c). An early example is Colonial Governor Tryon establishing a summer capitol in Hillsborough (Murray 1983:39). Wake County would have been on the road to Hillsborough, and it is thought, since the county takes its name from Tryon's wife, they had acquaintances and made overnight stops in the county. During the Regulator Rebellion in 1768, Tryon raised troops for the Battle of Alamance with some difficulty. Wake County was in the borderlands between the rebellious Piedmont (especially Orange County) and the loyalist Coastal Plain.

In 1834, advanced education appeared in northern Wake County. The Baptist State Convention opened Wake Forest College to train young men for the ministry (Murray 1983:301). At the same time northern Wake County began to experience the effects of a growing national economy and an increasingly settled outlook. The coming of the railroad represents a pivotal moment in settlement patterns, as communities reoriented themselves from Colonial period river and coach transport to industrial period rail lines. In northern Wake County this moment came in the late 1830s, when a station of the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad was established at Forestville, northwest of the study area (Murray 1983:416). This station was later moved north two miles to Wake Forest. The 1870 Fendol Bevers map of Wake County (Figure 3.2) reflects the changes in landscape wrought by improved transportation and industrialism.

Until the coming of the railroads in the late 1830s, the economy of the North Carolina Piedmont was primarily based on subsistence farming. This status continued until the development of transportation systems lessened the isolation of inland regions and allowed for development of market-oriented farming. The Neuse River seems to have been a boundary between western and southern Wake County, where land holdings were generally smaller-less than 200 acres-and the much larger plantation lands and slave holdings to the northeast (Robinson 1998:22). These holdings became formidable after the development of the cotton gin at the turn of the nineteenth century. Large and economically independent cotton plantations became the hallmark of the area, as they did generally in the Antebellum Coastal Plain. Railroad transportation further enhanced the economic productivity of cotton lands. In the immediate pre–Civil War decades the area flourished with grist mills, cotton gins, and distilleries. One of the largest paper mills in the state was built below the Falls of the Neuse in 1854. Impressive architectural remains are still present along US 401 to the northeast of Neuse Levee in the form of plantation residences and outbuildings (Robinson 1998:23–28).

Mining, especially of iron and gold, brought important external trade to the western Piedmont in the early decades of the 1800s, but Wake missed this boom. Graphite was known to exist west of Raleigh by 1815, but was not extensively exploited until 1855 (Murray 1983:136, 284). Along US 401 to the northeast of the study area granite quarries were opened in Franklin County near Louisburg in the 1800s (Robinson 1998).

Except for the passage of Federal troops at the end of the Civil war, and a notable encounter between soldiers and kitchen help at Peterson Dunn's Plantation to the west of the research area (Lilly and Gunn 1997; Murray 1983), the Civil War had little direct impact on northern Wake County. Reconstruction, however, was economically difficult and adjustment required time before the grist mills and gins were active again. A concerted effort was made to grow cotton in the Coastal Plain and process it into usable products in the water-powered Piedmont counties to reduce dependence on northern industrial technology. Textile production became the dominant industry in most of the Piedmont, but furniture manufacture was also important. By the end of the nineteenth century, North Carolina was the leading industrial state in the South.

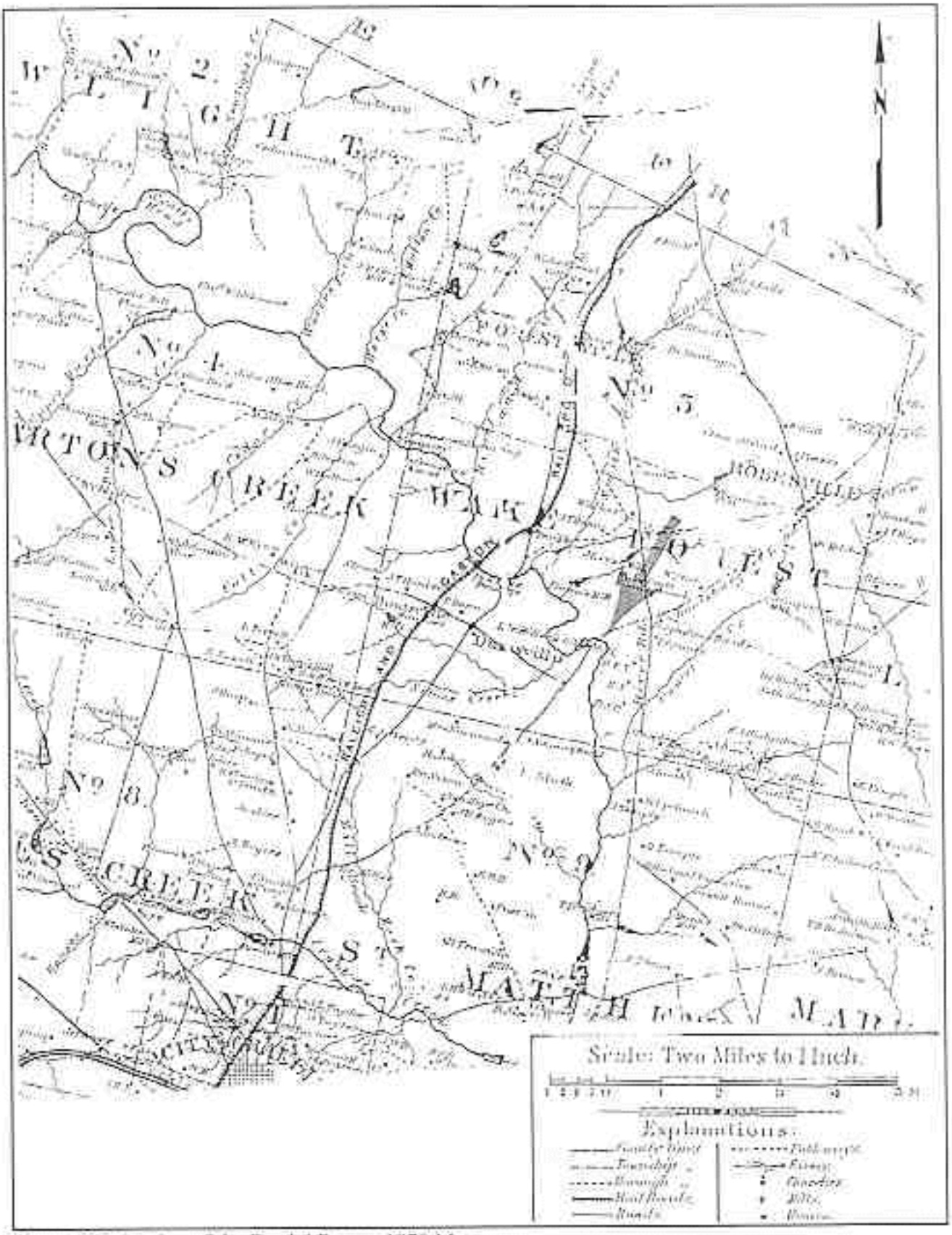


Figure 3.2. Section of the Fendol Bevers 1870 Map.

Cotton farming continued to dominate the economy as late as the late 1870s, but has been in decline since. In the 1880s the brightleaf tobacco industry sparked another period of prosperity in the region. After slavery, the tobacco revival was based on a system of tenancy with widely scattered tenants resident on leased land. The archaeological remains of their humble abodes are the most widespread cultural manifestation on the rural landscape in both the Coastal Plain and Piedmont (Figure 3.3). Tobacco, hogs, cattle, and poultry are the primary cash crops today in the remaining rural portions of the county, but large areas have been taken over by suburban development and the commercial and industrial activities associated with the Research Triangle and state government.

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The upper Neuse River basin and Fall Line region has been the focus of considerable archaeological attention since Coe arrived at the University of North Carolina in the 1930s. For the Late Woodland and Ethnohistorical periods, this work was brought to a focus in the 1970s and 1980s by the UNC Siouan Project (Dickens et al. 1987; Ward and Davis 1993). Projects below the Falls of the Neuse are within the Fall Line aspect of the Neuse watershed and reside on the eastern margin of the UNC study areas (Figure 3.4).

Although not in the Neuse watershed, studies by Woodall (1991) and his students in the Yadkin River Valley Project of Early Woodland period sites are also relevant to this and other Neuse Fall Line studies. Before the Wakefield projects, no previous Early Woodland sites had been studied in the Neuse basin.

The Neuse Fall Line region shares with the Yadkin River studies about a third of the Early Woodland components in the state. Because of the construction of Falls Lake Reservoir, most of the work in the immediate area of the Falls has been above the Falls of the Neuse. Several projects were conducted above the Falls of the Neuse in the 1970s because of the construction of Falls Lake (Claggett et al. 1978). In recent years, surveys have been made below the Falls because of housing developments, the Falls River projects and the Wakefield projects.

The Falls River project (Lilly et al. 1995, Lilly 1996) south of the river was followed by survey north of the river in the Wakefield development (Lilly and Gunn 1997), and on the site of the Wakefield School site (Gunn and Lilly 1997; Gunn et al. 1997). Surveys in the Wakefield Plantation development and Wakefield School site were followed by Phase III excavations at three sites: Red Hawk Run (31WA1376), 31WA1390, and 31WA1380, on Wakefield Creek (Gunn et al. 1998).

The surveys and excavations provided substantial new knowledge of prehistoric behavior below the Falls of the Neuse through the study of a river-to-ridge transect of the valley. Studying sites along the transect showed that, as is generally accepted, the settlement pattern shifted from ridge tops to river side in the Archaic to Woodland transition. However, it was found that use of the middle elevation site, 31WA1390, at the riparian-to-valley wall vegetation edge was suspended during the Early Woodland. This suggests that the shift from hunting to fishing associated with the Woodland, at least in certain contexts, was definitive. Phelps (1983) notes that several sites in the Coastal Plain were occupied from the Archaic and abandoned during the Early Woodland.

Numerous other cultural resource studies have been conducted in the northern Wake County area. The following review of available reports focuses on those in the northeastern portion of the county centering on the Falls of the Neuse. The review is divide into two parts: above the falls and below.

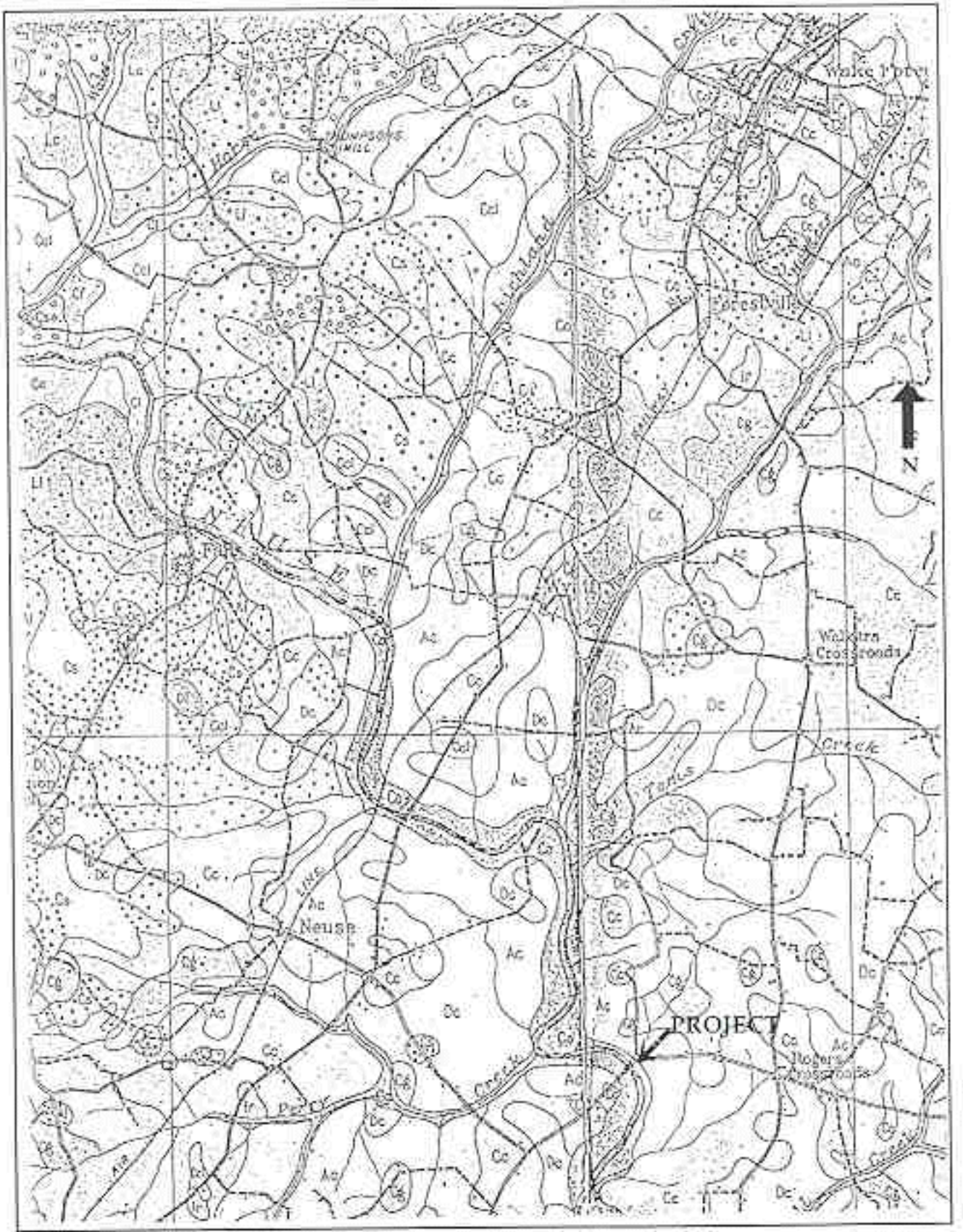


Figure 3.3. Section of the 1914 Wake County Soils Map (Brinkley et al. 1916).

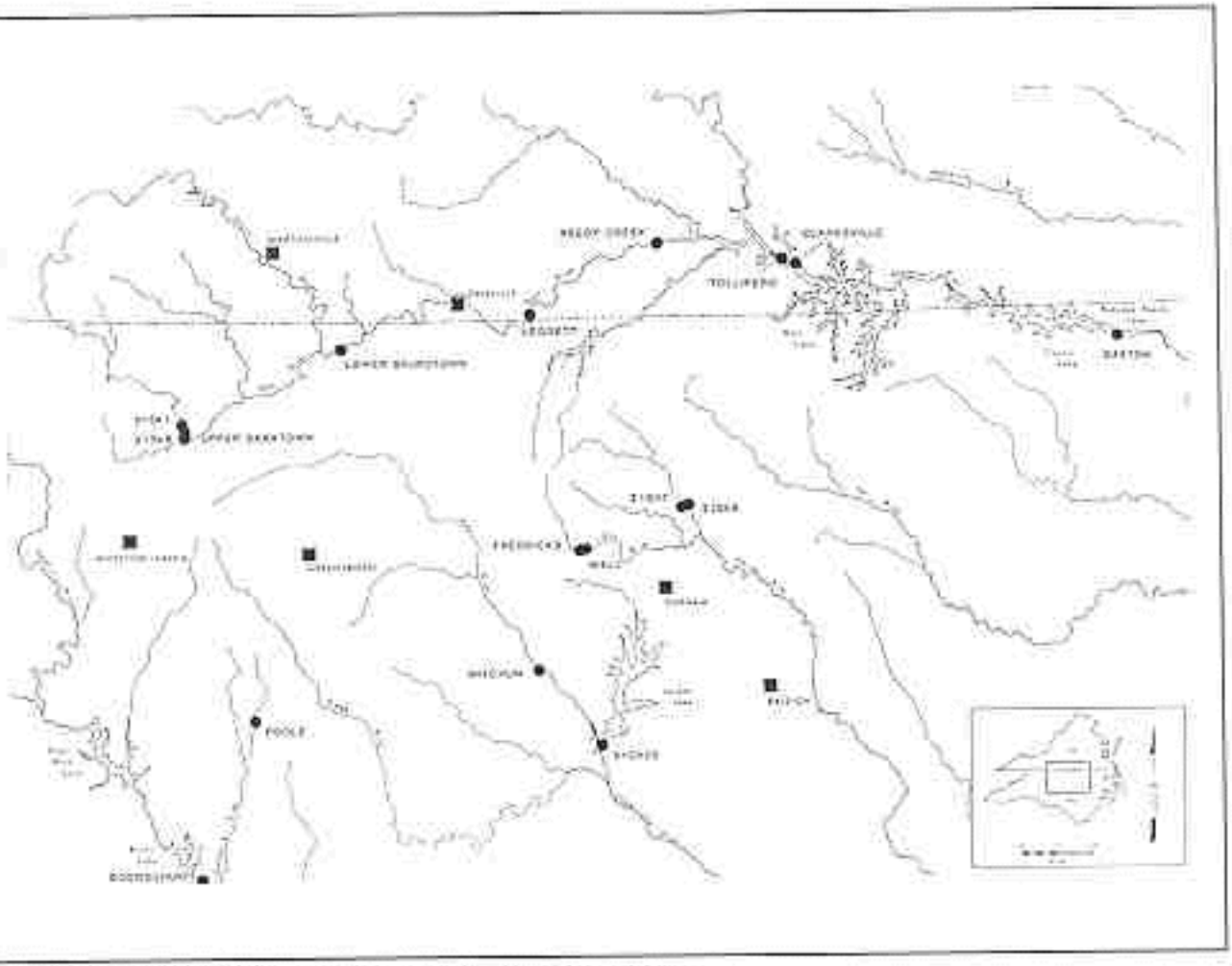
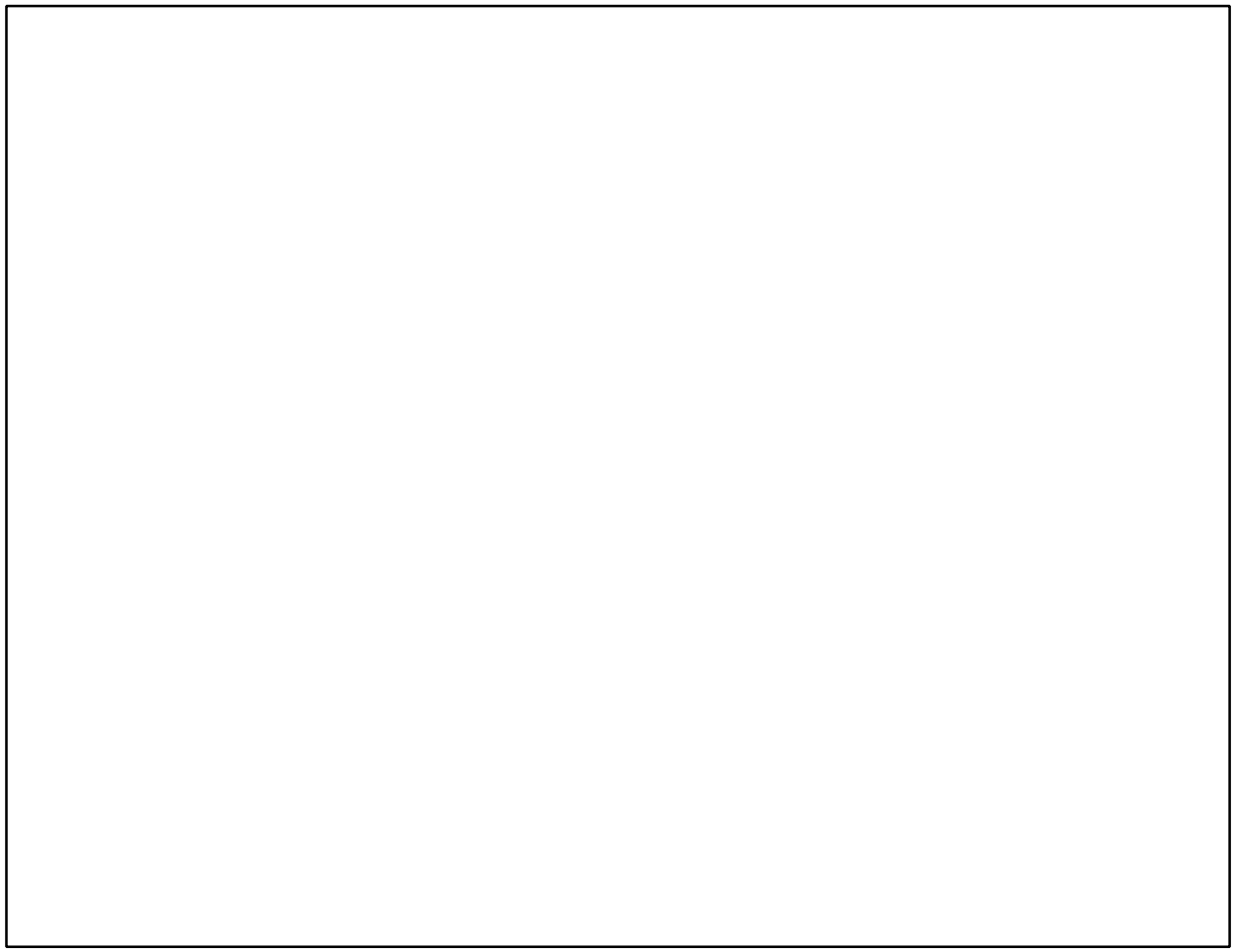


Figure 3.4. Siouan Project and Fall Line Neuse Basin Sites.



Above the Falls of the Neuse

The Fall Line region contains notably high densities of sites. Preparation for the 1970s construction of the Falls Lake Reservoir provided an opportunity to study the character and settlement pattern in the area. Falls Lake reservoir begins about 16 km west of the project area in the Durham Triassic basin. Claggett et al. (1978) identified 235 archaeological sites in 8,100 acres (29 sites per 1,000 acres). Nearly 6% of the sites were on topographic rises in the Neuse River floodplain. Archaic sites were scattered more uniformly over the landscape than Woodland sites, which tended to be concentrated in the floodplains. Archaeological Research Consultants (Baker and Hargrove 1981; Hargrove 1985), working the more elevated areas above the impoundment, found 600 sites in 10,500 acres (57 sites per 1,000 acres). Cable (1991) surveyed 47.8 miles (approximately 1,168 acres) of shoreline along Falls Lake, and found 83 sites (71 sites per 1,000 acres).

Cantley (1993) surveyed 450 acres on Woodpecker Ridge 15 miles northwest of the project area for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District. Four previously reported sites were investigated, and an additional 11 sites were discovered. Cantley's (1993:41) summary table indicates that within these 11 sites, two Archaic components and one Woodland component were identified. Six prehistoric components were noted without temporal diagnostics. Three historic components were found. Most of the sites were approximately 30–60 m in longest dimensions.

In late summer of 1995, New South Associates, Inc., surveyed four timber compartments totaling 1,304 acres for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District, and identified a number of prehistoric and historic sites within approximately 2 miles of the project area.

New and more localized sources of lithic material have been discovered in recent years. A source of rhyolite and a rhyolite quarry workshop were discovered about 20 miles west of the project area in Durham County (Eastman et al. 1995). Also, Lautzenheizer and Eastman (1996) have reported chert sources in the Triassic basins. The proximity of such resources to the project area could provide information on seasonal rounds and other prehistoric habits. However, the surprising discovery of a rhyolite source at Neuse Levee and a workshop, presumably from river gravels, adds a new dimension to the source material question—not only for the subject of this report, but for the general question of where lithic resources are found. Lithic resources will be further discussed in the lithic analysis chapter.

Below the Falls of the Neuse

Several projects have been conducted in the area below the Falls of the Neuse. Archaeological Research Consultants (Hargrove 1991) conducted a survey of the Little River Reservoir eight miles to the southeast of the study area. The survey included 2,495 acres below the 280-foot contour. Four previously recorded sites and 104 additional sites were investigated (43 sites per 1,000 acres). This survey is of interest to the Neuse Fall Line region study because it covered both lowlands and uplands using currently accepted standards. That site density was lower than on Falls Lake Reservoir might be due to the more Coastal Plain environment of the Little River. Most of the 108 sites were eroded lithic scatters.

Within the proposed reservoir was Mitchell's Mill (31WA892). It was a milling community with a gristmill between about 1800 and 1915. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and included in the North Carolina Park system.

Archaeological Research Associates (Hargrove 1986, 1987) conducted a survey of the Neuse River/Perry Creek Sewer Interceptor between Richland and Crabtree Creeks (approximately 13 river miles). Hargrove's survey actually covered the reach of the Neuse River that includes Neuse Levee. However, the pipeline right-of-way cut across the meander loop to the south of the site, so the survey did not actually cross Neuse Levee. A 50% sample of the line was shovel tested at 40-m intervals. Seven sites, similar to Neuse Levee, were discovered, all on Congaree soils, but none on Wehadkee, Bibb, or Chewacla soils, which were also investigated.

Directly relevant to the Neuse Levee project is Maher's (1992) survey 4.5 miles of US 401 for the present project involving highway widening by NCDOT. Four sites were discovered. He summarizes his and other findings as follows: "Sites are located both within the Neuse River floodplain and on elevated areas adjacent to smaller steam course . . . [T]here is a strong potential for buried, significant sites in the Neuse River floodplain on, or adjacent to, levee remnants" (Maher 1992:10).

A year later, Glover (1993) tested 31WA1137. He reported that the site is 28 x 45 m and is on a levee 3–4 m above the Neuse River. Two test units were excavated. One 1-x-1-m unit on the historic levee was sterile. A 1-x-3-m unit on the prehistoric levee contained a Yadkin point, rhyolite chipping debris, and sand-tempered sherds. Deeper levels contained "Guilford" Middle Archaic and Savannah River Late Archaic points. The deepest level was 95 cm below the surface. Glover maintained that the site was of singular importance, as few undisturbed Archaic sites are known in North Carolina.

In the spring of 1995, Garrow and Associates, Inc., conducted a cultural resources survey of 1,000 acres south of the Neuse River just below the Falls Lake dam for the Falls River Development; that survey identified 25 archaeological sites (25 sites per 1,000 acres), including 11 prehistoric components, 12 historic period components, and two multicomponent sites (Lilly et al. 1995). In addition, 20 isolated prehistoric finds were located. Four of those sites were recommended potentially eligible for the NRHP

based on their possible undisturbed and significant deposits. Both 31WA1216 and 31WA1230 were Middle Woodland period occupations that produced assemblages of prehistoric ceramics and lithics. Site 31WA1222 produced a small Savannah River Stemmed point from the Late Archaic period. Site 31WA1223 was dated to the Middle to Late Archaic period based on the presence of two Guilford projectile points and a soapstone bowl fragment.

Garrow and Associates, Inc., tested sites 31WA1216 and 31WA1230 in the fall of 1996 in order to determine if they contained intact and significant prehistoric data that would render them eligible for the NRHP (Lilly 1996). While 31WA1216 was found to contain no significant and intact deposits, 31WA1230 did contain intact subsurface layers with a moderate assemblage of both ceramics and lithic debitage. The ceramics dated to the Yadkin phase of the Middle Woodland period (ca. A.D. 600–1200).

Sites 31WA1376, 31WA1380, and 31WA1390 (see Figure 3.4) were identified during Phase I on Wakefield Creek in 1997 (Gunn, Idol et al. 1997; Gunn and Lilly 1997). Twenty-one road and sewer crossings were investigated within the Wakefield Plantation development property, and four road and sewer crossings and 110 acres were surveyed for the Wakefield School property. The Wakefield School site was surveyed exhaustively, and seven additional sites were discovered.

Site 31WA1376 was preserved mostly intact beneath a layer of alluvium. The site measured 40 x 25 m with deposits extending from approximately 23 to 107 cmbs (Gunn and Lilly 1997). It had the second highest artifact density index (54 artifacts per 1-x-1-m unit) among the three Wakefield Creek sites. Artifacts included rhyolite and quartz flakes, several chipped stone tools, Middle Woodland (ca. 400 B.C.–A.D. 500) sand- and grit-tempered pottery sherds with eroded surface decorations, fabric-impressed grit-tempered sherds, and one Wakefield projectile point. A Hardaway projectile point collected from the surface suggested a terminal Paleoindian occupation. Three features were found. Feature 1 was a midden of dark organic soil with an oxidizable carbon ratio date of A.D. 275. Feature 2 was a concentration of four large rocks. It appeared to be a vessel stand. Feature 3 proved to be a rock discard feature comprised of a dense concentration of burned rocks without charcoal. It was found to have excessively high phosphorus concentrations and was assumed to be a fish processing facility.

Site 31WA1380 was located on a third terrace at the confluence of two streams with Wakefield Creek. This site measures 30 x 30 m and was occupied during the Late Archaic and Early Woodland (Gunn, Idol et al. 1997). This site had the highest artifact density index (71 artifacts per unit) among the three sites. Artifacts included numerous rhyolite, quartzite, and quartz flakes; fabric impressed and cordmarked sherds, and one specimen each of Palmer, Guilford, Yadkin, and Piscataway-like Wakefield points. A probable feature was identified. Phytoliths from the feature seem to indicate an open canopy above a fire place. The feature area contained the highest concentration of ceramics in the site and in the watershed. In Area A a large stone was found with Guilford (fine variety) and Savannah River points.

Site 31WA1390 measures 45 x 25 m (0.1 ha) (Gunn, Idol et al. 1997). The site was located on two stream terraces. It contained the lowest artifact density among the three sites (31 artifacts per 1-x-1-m unit). Artifacts included rhyolite, quartz, and quartzite flakes, triangular projectile points, and ceramic sherds. These artifacts were found both on the floodplain and terrace. Microscopic charcoal in phytolith samples suggested a hearth. A Morrow Mountain and a Savannah River point and crude bifaces were found. An Eared Yadkin point was recovered in the upper stratum, but no Wakefield points.

Since no pre-Woodland components in the floodplain aspects of the Wakefield sites have been discovered, it is likely that pre-Woodland deposits were scoured during earlier, more flood-prone episodes of the Holocene, probably the Middle Holocene. Only 31WA1376 has possible Middle Holocene deposits, but there are no cultural materials. That the Late Holocene sediments in the sites have survived, despite the historic introduction of agriculture to the area suggests a relatively benign Late Holocene flood regime compared to the Middle Holocene.

The last site on the valley transect (see Figure 2.2) is 31WA1387, and its landform equivalents 31WA1065 and 31WA1389. These sites are completely upland and solidly Archaic in age of occupation. Only one sherd was found at 31WA1389 out of the hundreds of artifacts from the sites. Site 31WA1389 is clearly the most densely covered with artifacts and, by inference, the most frequently and densely occupied. It is also closest of the three sites to the Neuse River, both in elevation and distance. Was 31WA1389 the most habitable upland site in the region during the Middle Holocene, or were there other, more richly endowed sites lower and closer to the Falls of the Neuse? Further intensive survey such as that done on the School Site would be necessary to determine this.

In a project designed to further test for sites in small floodplains, Hargrove (1998) explored valley bottoms on the eastern slope of Richland Creek in the Wakefield development. Three sites were found: two were on ridge noses to the west of Richland Creek, and one (31WA1398) was located on the floodplain of a small unnamed tributary of Richland Creek. The location is about 600 m up Richland Creek from its confluence with the Neuse River and 100 m east of the tributary confluence where it erodes into the Richland Creek valley wall. The location is analogous to that of Red Hawk Run (31WA1376), the site on Wakefield Creek with the elevated phosphorus signatures. Its location could signal a similar site function of fish exploitation. Late Archaic, Middle Woodland, and Late Woodland artifacts were found. These included six net-impressed sherds, implying a Late Woodland occupation, which differs from any of the Wakefield Creek sites but parallels the assemblage at Neuse Levee. Although more sites should be examined, it is possible that net-impressed sherds at Richland Creek and Neuse Levee reflect a realignment of settlement away from the high-relief terrain at the Fall Line, such as that at Wakefield Creek near the Falls of the Neuse in the Early Woodland, toward open, perhaps arable, floodplain lands in the Neuse Levee sediment basin in the Late Woodland. A similar pattern has been noted at the Great Falls of the Potomac in northern Virginia (Potter 1993).

Neuse Fall Line Settlement Patterns

Other surveys and other Woodland sites comparable in size, topographic and geographic setting, and structure to those discovered in the Wakefield Plantation project provide a context in which to evaluate the regional settlement pattern. The comparable sites were found during intensive survey and testing studies conducted for the Falls Lake and Little River reservoirs, within 10 miles of the project area. The Falls Lake study is west of the Wakefield project area and toward the Piedmont. It presumably represents a more characteristic Piedmont settlement pattern. The Little River study is toward the Coastal Plain. The Wakefield Creek projects are at the transitional zone between the Piedmont and Coastal Plain, and in the transition between the Falls Lake and Little River studies.

Looking first to the west, of the 280 sites identified above the Falls of the Neuse by Claggett et al. (1978), 66 sites exhibited evidence of Woodland period occupation. Of those, two (3%) were from the uplands (Figure 3.5), 25 (38%) were from the transition zone, and 39 (59%) were from floodplain or from low stream-side terraces. Only 16 of the sites were single-component Woodland period occupations; over 80% of these were in floodplains or on low streamside terraces. To the east, in Hargrove's (1991) study of the Little River drainage, 40 Woodland sites were investigated. Three sites (7.5%) were identified on stream terraces (31WA17 is a multicomponent site). Thirty-five sites (88%) were located in upland settings. This reversal of upland/lowland frequencies of sites between the Falls Lake and Little River areas indicates very different land use patterns.

An overview of the landform and soils setting of the seven prehistoric sites found during the Wakefield project (Table 4.1) reveals some variability in their distribution in the landscape. Four sites (57%) are in floodplain/terrace situations, one site (14%) in the transition zone, and two sites (29%) in upland ridge crests. Thus, as might be anticipated, the Wakefield pattern, like its physiographic zone, is transitional between Piedmont and Coastal Plain (see Figure 3.5). Soils origins of the sites were obtained as well. The upland Wakefield sites are located wholly or in part on the Appling soil (Table 3.1). Lowland sites are on Mantachie soil, or in the case of 31WA1378, the Wehadkee-Bibb soil.

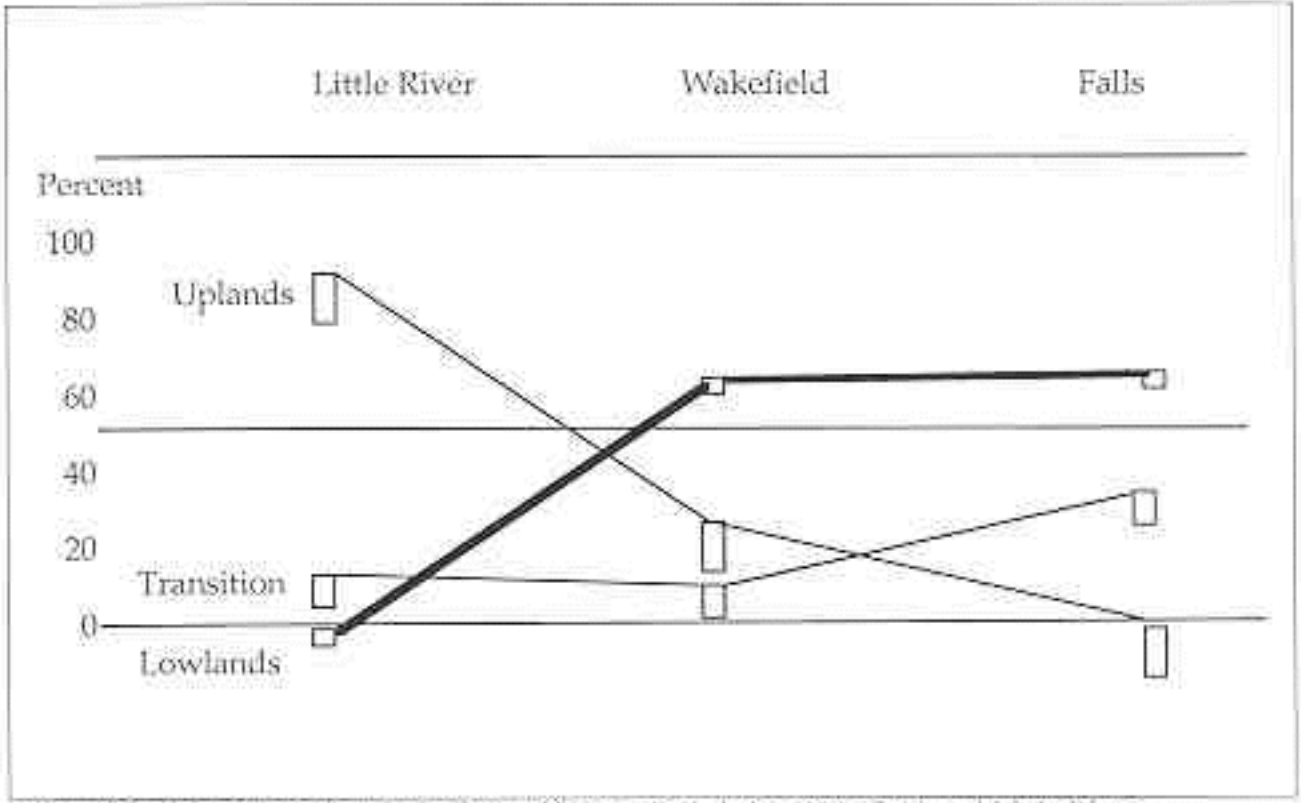
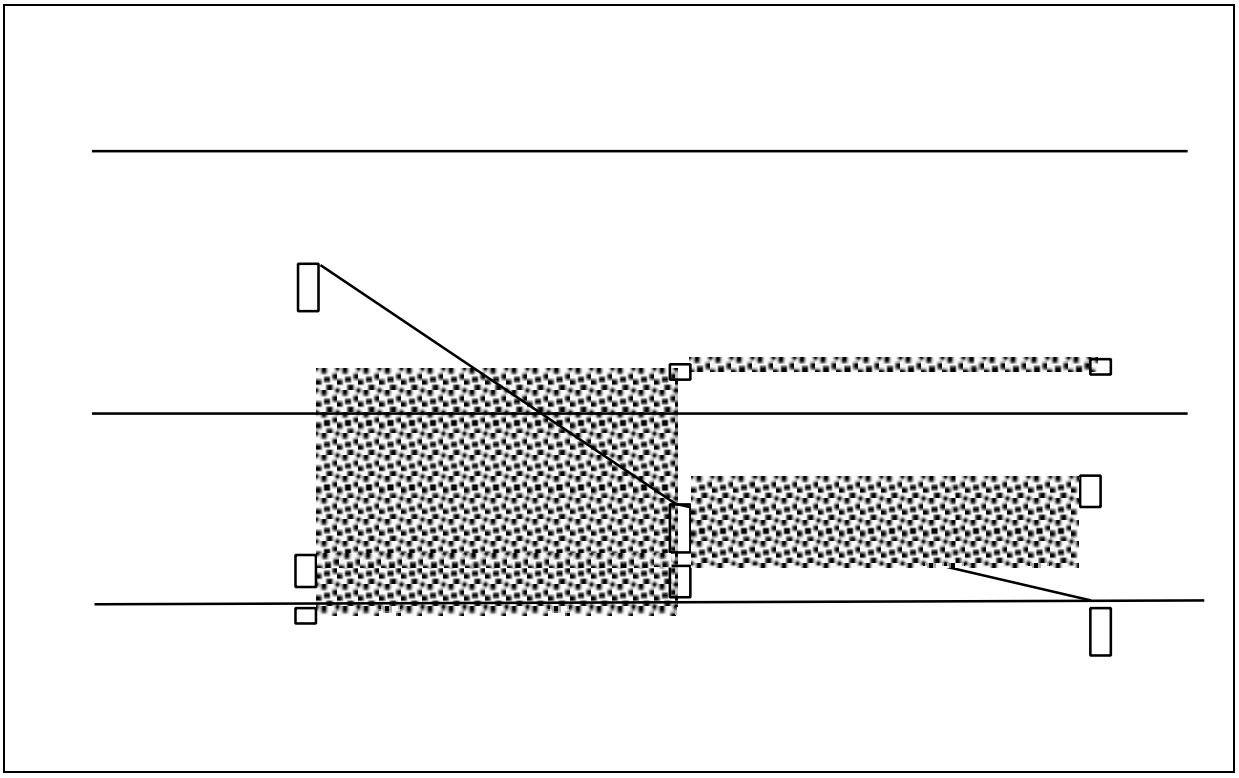


Figure 3.5. Topographic Concentrations of Sites at Falls Lake, Wakefield, and Little River.



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In Hargrove's (1991) Little River study, 19 (51%) of the 35 Woodland sites found in upland settings were on Appling sandy loam similar to that of the Wakefield School site project. As in the Wakefield School site, none of these upland sites possessed intact deposits. One site was a Middle Woodland component in upland Louisburg loamy sand.

Site 31WA1230, south of the Neuse River at the Falls (Lilly 1996), lies in a streamside terraces setting rather than in uplands. It therefore resembles in location the Wakefield sites, and also those of the Falls Lake surveys. However, since 31WA1230 also lies in Appling sandy loam, there is a correlation with the Woodland sites on the Little River.

In a previous study (Gunn and Lilly 1997), site 31WA1376 was suggested to represent some sort of activity, probably fishing, at the highest locations on tributary streams with substantial pools of water. The organically rich soils with elevated levels of phosphorus (see Leigh in Gunn et al. 1998) and the accumulation of burned rocks in the site support a hypothesis of processing fatty fish, perhaps shad (see Millis in Gunn et al. 1998). Although no archaeological evidence supports migrations of anadromous fish into the Piedmont, when Euro-American settlers started to dam the Deep River near High Point to build mills, protests were lodged against these construction projects because they blocked the shad runs (Gunn et al. 1993). Prehistoric people on the Neuse could have relied on similar foods.

Table 3.1. Summary of Prehistoric Sites on Wakefield Creek and Neuse Levee.

Site	Elevation	Components	Landform	Soil
31WA1387	364	Archaic, Woodland	Ridge crest	Appling/Cecil
31WA1065	343	Prehistoric	Ridge slope	Cecil
31WA1389	325	Early Archaic, Woodland	Ridge crest	Appling/Cecil
31WA1380	280	Early/Middle Archaic, Woodland	3rd Terrace	Appling
31WA1390	265	Middle Archaic/Woodland	2nd Terrace Floodplain/3rd Terrace	Mantachie
31WA1376	220	Paleoindian, Woodland	1st Terrace Floodplain	Mantachie
31WA1378	215	Prehistoric	1st Terrace Floodplain	Wehadkee Bibb
31WA1137	183	Late Archaic, Woodland	Floodplain Levee	Congaree